



*Commission on*  
**H i s p a n i c   A f f a i r s**  
*2 0 0 5   A n n u a l   R e p o r t*

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## COMMISSIONER BIOS

**Leo Gaeta** Commissioner Gaeta is the program director for Columbia Basin Community Health. He lives in Othello and is a captain in the Washington Air National Guard. He serves as chair of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs.

**Yvonne Lopez-Morton** Yvonne Lopez Morton is the co-chair of the Commission and Project Assistant for Spokane Public School's Safe Schools, Healthy Students Initiative. Yvonne is a graduate of the University of New Mexico.

**Rebecca Villareal** Commissioner Villareal serves as the chair of the Economic Development Committee. She is a Business Lender with Cascadia Revolving Fund in Seattle and is also on the board of directors for the Kitsap County Community Development Corporation. Commissioner Villareal resides in Bainbridge Island.

**Diana Avalos** Commissioner Avalos works for the Vancouver School District as a program director for the Migrant Education Program. She serves as the chair of the Education Committee.

**Gabriel Portugal** Commissioner Portugal is a teacher in the Kennewick School District and is also the Committee Board President for the Tri-Cities "Cinco de Mayo" Committee.

**Homero Tamez** Commissioner Tamez holds a Masters in Social Work. He is a Certified Counselor/Consultant who provides independent services to business owners, individuals, and families in the Tri-Cities area. He serves on the Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Advisory Board and the Department of L&I Farmworker Advocates Board.

**Faviola Contreras** Commissioner Contreras is the Multi-Cultural Affairs Coordinator for Wenatchee Valley College. She serves on the Education committee. Commissioner Contreras resides in Wenatchee.

**Ruben Baca** Commissioner Baca is the Bellingham Police Department's Expanded Outreach Program coordinator, and a member of the Bellingham Police Departments Community Interaction Council. He has a Masters Degree in Business Administration.

**Graciela Villanueva-Lopez** Commissioner Graciela is the Director of Human Resources for Planned Parenthood of Central Washington. Graciela received her M.B.A. from Washington State University. Graciela serves on the Small Business Development committee for the commission.

**Lourdes Portillo Salazar**

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends and Community Members,

We would like to take this opportunity to present to you the Commission on Hispanic Affairs 2005 Annual Report. This report reflects the efforts of both our appointed Commissioners and the Commission staff as we accomplish our mission in serving the Latino community of Washington State.

As a Commission, we are tasked with advising the Governor, legislators, and state agencies regarding issues affecting Latinos. Throughout the year, the Commission holds public meetings at various locations across the State of Washington. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for community members to inform the Commission regarding issues that affect or impact the Latino community. The attached report compiles information on input received as well as recommendations that address immediate and long-term needs of our Washington State Latino communities.

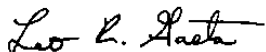
During the past year, the focus of the Commission has been in the following areas:

- Student education achievement and retention
- Access to healthcare coverage for immigrant children
- Economic development
- Pesticide and farm worker safety
- Immigration

The Commission has repeatedly heard input/feedback from the Latino community regarding the above areas. As a result, we have made these areas the priority focus of our actions. The Commission has enjoyed working with many local, private, non-profit, and state agencies in addressing these areas and asks for your continued support as we address these issues and remove the barriers that prevent Latinos from fully access the services and quality of life offered in our great state.

I am pleased to be able to provide you with the Commission's 2005 Annual Report. The Commission on Hispanic Affairs will continue to work hard to address issues and concerns affecting Latinos and looks forward to continued service to the Latino community and to the State of Washington. Should any questions arise regarding the contents of this report, please contact the Commission on Hispanic Affairs office or myself at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted,



Leo R. Gaeta, Chair  
Washington Commission on Hispanic Affairs

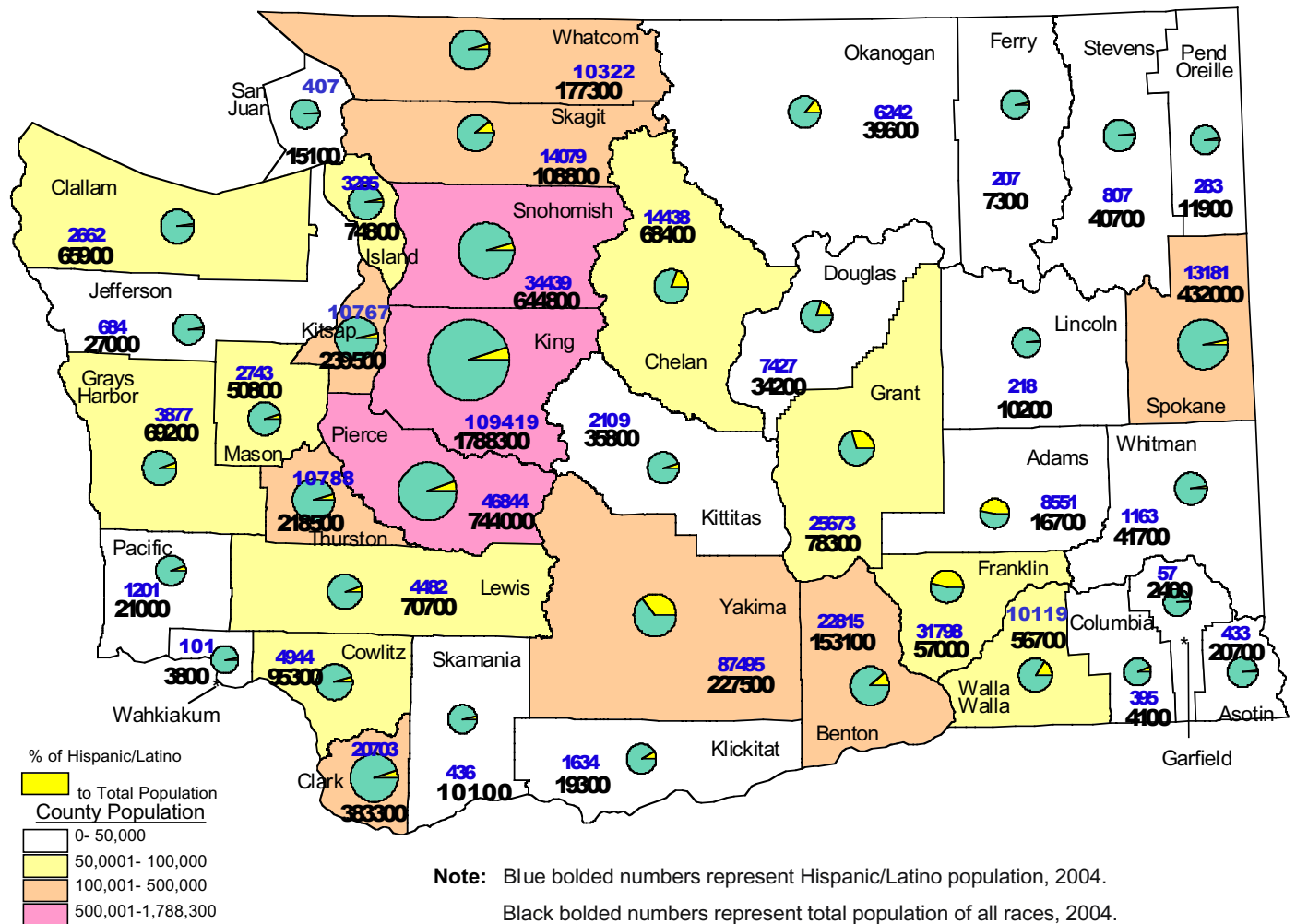
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## DEMOGRAPHIC NOTES

- As of July 1, 2004, the Census Bureau estimated there were 293.7 million people living in the United States and 41.3 million call themselves Hispanic.
- Hispanics are the largest minority in our nation and in Washington State. During the decade of the 90s Washington State population was one of the fastest growing in the country due to the fact that the Hispanic population in our state grew by 105%. (Washington State Republican National Hispanic Assembly)
- Projections by the Washington Office of Financial Management show that by mid-decade minorities will increase by 1.4 million and represent 23% of Washington's population.
- Washington State has the second lowest Latino student retention rate in the nation. The annual overall drop out rate for Latino students is 39% (OSPI Graduation and Dropout Statistics for Washington 2002-2003) and Latino students with limited English proficiency had graduation rates of 50 percent.
- Latinos (35%) are more likely than whites (14%) or African Americans (21%) to report being without health insurance. (Pew Hispanic Center 2002 National Survey of Latinos)
- There are more pregnancy related deaths among Latina women (10.3 per 100,000) than among non-Hispanic white women (6 per 100,000). Puerto Rican women are more at risk among Latinas. (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Certified minority and women's businesses employed over 9,700 people and generated over \$500 million in revenue for the Washington economy in 2003. (Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises)
- According to the 2004 Latino Labor Report real weekly earnings for Hispanics declined by 2.2% in 2003 but declined by 1.8% and 1% respectively in 2004. Latinos are the only group whose wages have fallen for two consecutive years. (Pew Hispanic Center)
- Working-age adults (18- to 64-year-olds) totaled 184.0 million. Nationally, 63 percent were in this age range. The proportion who were members of this age group ranged from 66 percent for Asians to 61 percent for blacks and Hispanics. (U.S. Census Bureau News)
- Seven out of every 10 Washington residents are eligible to register to vote, compared to less than 4 out of every 10 Latino residents in Washington are currently eligible to register to vote. (Commission of Hispanic Affairs, 2003)

# WASHINGTON STATE

## Distribution of Hispanic/Latino to Total Population in Individual Counties



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## 2005 LEGISLATIVE RECAP

The CHA tracked many bills during the 2005 legislative session several of the bills passed will affect the Hispanic community in regards to health, education, and economic development. E2SHB 1441 proposes that all children in the state of Washington have health coverage by 2010. This bill will especially help children under the age of 18 who are below the federal poverty level acquire medical assistance. E2SSB 5782 will address minority and women's business enterprises accessibility to available resources. Funds will be used to create jobs and more economic opportunities.

Under E2SSB 5441 a steering committee will develop recommendations about how the state can best provide stable funding for students of early learning, K-12 education, and higher education. SHB 1987 will allow alternative assessments for students interested in technical and industrial vocations in replacement of the WASL test score as a graduation requirement. Under SHB 1345 a pilot program will determine financial aid eligibility for part-time students. SHB 1708 proposes that the superintendent of public instruction review and evaluate promising programs for dropout prevention.

Educational bills that were unsuccessful that would have benefited the Latino were plentiful. HB 2037 regarding academic achievement for immigrant students would have addressed educational barriers facing the Latino community, low-income, and other minority students in Washington State. SB 5359 regarding WASL score reporting would have adopted performance improvement goals in all the key academic subjects. These goals would have helped economically disadvantaged students, Limited English Proficiency students, students with disabilities, and students from academically underachieving racial and ethnic backgrounds. Under SB 5638 a student could have retaken one or more areas of assessment in the WASL and/or the alternative assessment test for technical or industrial vocations. These provisions would have helped ensure Latino's accessibility to today's job market as well as reduce the alarming Latino dropout rate.

To bridge the higher education gap between Hispanic and non-Hispanic students SB 5575 would have permitted universities to maintain a diverse student population by considering race, color, or ethnicity in the admission process without using quotas. The U.S. Supreme Court has declared that an individualized consideration of race and ethnicity in university admissions is acceptable and Washington state should follow the U.S. Supreme Court decision. SCR 8401 would have created a joint community concerning Latino accessibility to higher education. SB 5854 would have adopted new state policies to promote educational equity and diversity in all levels of our state's educational institutions.

HB 1863 would have restricted use of highly toxic pesticides which concerns public health and farm worker safety. SB 5188 would have created a council that works to protect children from environmental health hazards, hazards found in inadequate housing, and reducing childhood lead exposure (SB 5189).

HB 1880 would have reduced the cost of traffic safety education courses for students who are qualified to receive school lunches on a reduced-cost or free basis.

SB 5648 would prohibit law enforcement from questioning victims of a crime about their immigration status, and SB 5647 would have limited the authority of peace officers to enforce federal immigration laws. HB 1311 and SB 5240 would have authorized the director of L&I to issue and enforce civil penalties for violations of the minimum wage act.

Mexican nationals in our state who may not have immigration documents should still have the ability to identify themselves before law enforcement as needed. HB 1697 would have issued provisional driver's licenses to persons failing to prove U.S. citizenship.

We thank every legislator who listened to our concerns or invited us to participate in hearings in 2005.

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# EDUCATION REPORT

The Commission attended and organized many educational events this year. Our CHA Director chaired a meeting that included statewide participation of educators, parents, and students in a discussion on how we could improve our WASL performance. The Director was also included in a radio broadcast with other Latino educators in a discussion on the Latino education status. The Director worked with OSPI in their multi-ethnic think tank to come up with innovative ways to fund programs that would decrease the educational gap between Hispanic and mainstream students. Each commissioner's task is to directly contact every school district and work collaboratively to resolve the educational issues that the Hispanic community faces. CHA will participate in the fall of 2005 Workforce Training and Development Board conference. In 2005 CHA and the Latino Education Achievement Project will host a conference that will address Hispanic student retention.

## High School Dropout Prevention

Education is essential to the economic health, cultural diversity, civic vitality, and political well-being of Washington state and the nation. Our state education system and all local educational agencies must respond accordingly with resources, programs, and policies that address the factors which impede Latino students to reach and gain a meaningful education.

Washington state has the second lowest Latino student retention rate in the nation. The annual overall dropout rate for Latino students is 39% (OSPI Graduation and Dropout Statistics for Washington 2002-2003) and Latino students with limited English proficiency had graduation rates of 50 percent. In an attempt to reduce the number of Latino dropouts CHA supports SHB 1708, which directs the OSPI to review and

evaluate the most promising dropout prevention programs and practices and report them to the Legislature.

In the past, OSPI reported limited graduation and dropout statistics, but did not take into consideration race/ethnicity and gender, and the reasons why students dropped out. Since 2000-01 OSPI has taken into consideration these factors to more effectively address this issue. HB 1727 would have adopted performance improvement goals for economically disadvantaged students, LEP students, students with disabilities, and students from underachieving racial and ethnic backgrounds. CHA recommends that the Legislature reconsider HB 1727 or similar future legislation.

## Educational Gap

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs is alarmed by the educational gap between Latino and non-Latino students and the paramount issue regarding mastery of the WASL as a graduation requirement. CHA recommends that HB 2204 and HB 2037 be reevaluated for the following legislative year. HB 2204 would have supported the unique learning needs of bilingual Latino students by providing extra assistance when taking the WASL and HB 2037 would have adopted an integrated program of academic and English language skills development to aid immigrant students.

## Hispanic 10th Grade WASL Scores

Year	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
1998-99	26.0%	11.6%	20.8%	
1999-00	35.9%	12.6%	12.7%	
2000-01	38.4%	14.6%	23.5%	
2001-02	34.9%	14.3%	29.4%	
2002-03	34.6%	16.2%	34.3%	11.1%
2003-04	41.3%	19.6%	42.5%	11.1%
2004-05	52.8%	23.9%	43.6%	14.2%

### Overall 10th Grade WASL Scores

Year	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
1998-99	51.4%	33.0%	41.1%	
1999-00	59.8%	35.0%	31.7%	
2000-01	62.4%	38.9%	46.9%	
2001-02	59.2%	37.3%	54.3%	
2002-03	60.0%	39.4%	60.5%	31.8%
2003-04	64.6%	44.0%	65.4%	32.3%
2004-05	72.4%	47.1%	64.7%	35.6%

Source: OSPI website: WASL Trends

Washington is becoming more ethnically and linguistically diverse. Over 90 percent of recent immigrants come from non-English speaking counties, and many of these immigrants arrive with little or no formal education. According to OSPI, most teachers and school administrators are white (more than 90% in each category), and in some school districts the student minority population is over 50 percent. SB 5854 would have required that teacher training and professional development programs include opportunities to learn cultural responsiveness skills and effective instructional strategies that are successful in raising the academic achievement of traditionally underachieving students.

School districts face significant difficulties in hiring and retaining sufficient bilingual teachers. Bilingual teachers are crucial in improving the academic success of English Language Learners. CHA recommends the development of a conditional loan or repayment program. CHA supports legislation that will give bilingual college students the incentive to become teachers while at the same time securing their commitment to work in Washington state.

### Higher Education

Since 1997, admissions of Latino students at our state's higher education institutions have not kept up with our population growth. While the

Latino population comprises almost 8% of the population of Washington, Latino enrollment at institutions of higher learning are less than 3%. Only within the past few years has SHB 1079 opened the doors of higher education for Latinos students who could not afford a college education. This year under SHB 1345, the higher education coordinating board will develop a pilot project for the 2005-2007 biennium to assess the need for and funding requirements that would be necessary for eligibility for state financial aid for part-time students. This bill will help Latino students with the costs and accessibility to higher education. More resources need to be reviewed because of the financial barrier that faces the Hispanic community.

It is the commitment of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs to inform and provide recommendations to policy makers, state legislators, and the Governor's office on the continuing efforts to provide Washington Latino students the opportunity to gain access to our colleges and universities to complete a post secondary education. Therefore, CHA advises that SHB 8401, creating a joint select committee concerning Latino accessibility to higher education, be reevaluated.

### Educational Levels Among NW Adult 25+ Hispanic Residents

EDUCATION	Seattle-Tacoma	Yakima-Tri Cities
Non High School Grad.	33.7%	69.4%
High School Grad.	14.4%	14.8%
Have Some College	14.5%	12.0%
Bachelor's Degree	36.1%	2.4%
Graduate/Prof. Degree	1.3%	1.4%

Source: Larson Northwest Hispanic Market Report 2003-2004



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## EMERGENT ISSUES

### **Pesticides**

The Commission is concerned with the findings in some of the study results conducted by the University of Washington regarding pesticide use and farmworkers' health. The Department of Agriculture and the Governor's office were sponsors of a Pesticide Safety and Health Conference in Yakima this year and the Commission attended this meeting. The first year results of the Farm Worker's Pesticide Project study showed that 1 in 5 workers had significant nervous system impacts. Without appropriate washing facilities at work where pesticides are applied farm workers can expose their children and families to the toxins when they return home from work. The Commission recommends that Washington state take immediate steps to strengthen regulations; including creating a no-spray buffer zone around schools and homes, mandating the use of enclosed systems for the mixing and loading of pesticides, and mandating enclosed cabs.

### **Children's Environmental Health**

SB 5188 meets a critical need, by creating a council that works to protect children from environmental health hazards, hazards found in inadequate housing. Hispanic children are disproportionately more likely to live in substandard housing, and disproportionately more likely to suffer from diseases like childhood asthma. Additionally, about 90% of our state's farmworkers are Hispanic, and their children are being exposed to pesticides at much higher levels than non-Hispanic children. And nationally, twice as many Latino children have dangerous levels of lead in their bloodstream when compared to non-Latino children. The need to protect our children from environmental health hazards is of significant concern to the Latino community of this state. The Commission recommends that SB 5188 or a similar bill be reconsidered for the next legislative session.

### **Local Law Enforcement and Immigration Laws**

Enforcing federal immigration law is the responsibility of the INS. State agencies should

make clear to crime victims that they are not immigration agents, and will not inquire as to a client's immigration status unless required to do so by federal law. SB 5648 would have limited the authority of law enforcement to inquire about the immigration status of crime victims and witnesses.

### **Lack of Cultural Competency**

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and OSPI, are seeing a pattern of a lack of cultural competency in educational institutions. Research from OSPI concludes that low-income and minority students encounter fewer opportunities to learn due to inadequate instruction and support, lower expectations from their schools and teachers, and schools are not sufficiently inclusive of all cultures represented in the state's public schools. In order to close the achievement gap, the educational system will need to change how it approaches learning and teaching through a greater understanding of the impact of language, culture, race, and poverty on student achievement. Schools must create more learning environments that are intolerant of racism and exclusion. The Commission will continue working with OSPI and recommends that the legislature reconsider HB 1659.

### **Wage Violations**

The Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act raises penalties against employers who repeatedly do not pay their workers and makes repeated non-payment a felony. The Commission is concerned with the amount of time it takes to recover the lost wages given that Latino workers continue to be exploited while their claims are settled. The legislature finds that over five thousand state residents per year file cases and complaints with L&I, and that the department doesn't have the means to address these complaints expediently. HB 1311, relating to authorizing the director of L&I to issue and enforce civil penalties for violations of the minimum wage act, would have created more efficient alternatives to address this issue. The Commission recommends that the legislature reconsiders HB 5240 and HB 1311.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Committee of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs is dedicated to supporting and developing the Hispanic business community as a strong and vibrant economic force. According to the Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises, certified minority and women's businesses employed over 9,700 people and generated over \$500 million in revenue for the Washington economy in 2003. The Commission became highly involved in two specific issues: helping small business owners (or prospective business owners) learn what it takes to be a successful business in the U.S. and assisting the smaller Hispanic chamber of commerce with becoming functional and practical chamber in their community.

In February 2005, the Economic Development Committee co-sponsored a business conference in Wenatchee where many Latinos attended workshops in Spanish to learn how to start a business which included licensing requirements, tax regulations, and how to handle their bookkeeping. Resource tables were set up with state and federal agencies and financial business lenders for existing and prospective Latino business persons. The conference co-sponsors also included Wells Fargo Bank, SBDC, and the Wenatchee Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The second business conference the Commission co-sponsored took place in the Tri-Cities. The committee members were representatives of the Pasco Downtown Business Association, Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, Tri-DEC, SBA, SBDC, and LULAC.

The Commission strongly supports E2SSB 5782 that will address minority and women's business enterprises accessibility to available resources. Funds will be used to create jobs and more economic opportunities as well. It is the commitment of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs to inform and provide recommendations to policy makers, and state legislators. Therefore the Commission recommends the following bills for reconsideration:

- HB 1091 Providing additional funding for the community economic revitalization board's program.

- SB 1594 Directing the state investment board to invest in start-up and expanding businesses within the state of Washington.
- SB 5325 Promoting economic development and community revitalization.
- SB 5330 Creating the economic development grants program.

The Commission will continue to create educational opportunities and offer resources to Latino business communities throughout the state in order to maintain a viable economic community.

### Hispanic Buying Power

Since Census 2000 there are 52,000 more Northwest Hispanics with \$1.5 billion more buying power. The Northwest Hispanic population doubled in the 80s, nearly doubled again in the 90s, and current estimates show that there are 891,000 permanent Hispanic residents with \$9 billion to spend, save and invest annually (Larson Northwest Hispanic Report 2003-2004). Unlike Migrant workers, only about 1/3 of permanent NW Hispanics are engaged in agriculture or unskilled labor. Their average household income is in the \$35-40K range. Seventy-five percent of the NW Hispanics are under the age of 35. The Commission will continue supporting legislation that serves this prosperous market and Hispanic small businesses.

### Permanent Resident Hispanic Population in the Five Main Markets

DMA Ranked by Population	1980	1990	2003 (With buying power)
1-Seattle-Tacoma	66,800	115,400	258,820 (\$2.8 billion)
2-Portland-Salem	49,000	91,700	235,470 (\$2.4 billion)
3-Yakima/Tricities	43,400	82,500	152,518 (\$1.5 million)
4-Boise/Nampa	18,228	34,650	61,920 (\$612 million)
5-Medford	6,510	12,375	23,232 (\$196 million)

*Source: Larson Northwest Hispanic Market Report*

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**Executive Assistant: Alicia Luna**

*We would like to thank Marisa Price for  
conducting the research and assembling this report*

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